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**Abstract**

This article examines the perceptions of early-career, fixed-term researchers in Finnish universities towards changing careers. It maps out the reasons this group has considered the change and where they see themselves in five years. As a theoretical framework, a synthesis of variables related to career change, created by Ryan, Healy, and Sullivan [2012. "Oh, Won't You Stay? Predictors of Faculty Intent to Leave a Public University." Higher Education 63: 421–437.], was used. The results show that the most common reasons for early-career researchers to change careers are job-security related stress, job-related dissatisfaction, and salary. Over half of the respondents would like to work at a university in five years; however, half of the respondents would also be happy to work in industry. Further examination of the responses highlighted the polarisation of those academics who were optimistic about their future employment opportunities in academia and those with highly pessimistic outlooks. The results of the study bear crucial importance when addressing the current discussion and issues related to the career paths of early-career researchers in Europe. (HRK /

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